



Finding
HOPE

during Times of Personal Trial

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A PERFECT BRIGHTNESS OF HOPE

“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”

—2 Nephi 31:20

WHAT IS HOPE?

Hope is a concept we deal with nearly every day. We hope for continued employment, that surgery will remove *all* of the cancer, that our spouse will gain a testimony of the gospel, or that our teenager will overcome their drug addiction. True hope is firm and unwavering. It is not flimsy, nor is it insubstantial. Hope is believing, trusting, and *knowing that* God will answer our prayers. Elder Neal A. Maxwell said, “Real hope is much more than wishful musing. It stiffens, not slackens, the spiritual spine. . . . Hope is realistic anticipation which takes the form of a determination—not only to survive adversity but, moreover, to ‘endure . . . well’ to the end.”² Hope gives us the ability to persevere through adversity.

Hope plays a significant role in helping us cope with the spectrum of life’s difficulties. Hope is a positive emotion, allowing us to have a general expectation of positive outcomes in the future. When we exercise hope, we can look forward with a degree of confidence because it acts as a calming influence

in our lives. Like many other positive emotions, hope enhances not only our spiritual selves but also our physical, mental, and social well-being.

True hope springs from a belief in Christ and is ever present at funerals, easing the sorrow that comes from being separated from our loved ones and replacing it with the joy of looking forward to a glorious reunion. It is because of hope for eternal life, and faith in Christ and the Resurrection, that we can look at death without terror (see Alma 27:28). Hope is not knowledge but rather an inward abiding trust that God will fulfill His promise of eternal life (see Doctrine and Covenants 59:23).

THE GOSPEL OFFERS HOPE

As spiritual beings, we came to live in a mortal world. While every generation is subject to unique trials, some are common to all, such as sickness, death, family discord, natural disasters, economic downturns, and political upheaval. In our day, we face worldwide trials, such as wars, fear of nuclear conflicts, global warming, and a worldwide pandemic when COVID-19 brought countries and global economies to their knees. And yet we continue to have hope, which is one of our doctrinal beliefs, as stated in the thirteenth article of faith: “We follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things.”

When burdened by hardship, we can always find hope in the gospel. Heavenly Father can help us escape the darkness of despair and illuminate our path when we struggle, such as when we go through a bitter divorce, are left paralyzed from an automobile accident, long for children but are unable to conceive, or suffer the effects of a tornado destroying our home. Personal trials can wrench our souls. Perhaps we'd hoped to find a companion and marry but are not given that opportunity, or maybe we're struggling to break the bonds of addiction. Others hope their chronic physical or mental challenges will cease, or at least be reduced to a manageable level. In all of our personal challenges, we may struggle to hold on to the knotted—and possibly frayed—end of our rope of hope. Let us not be like the ancient Israelites who cried out, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost” (Ezekiel 37:11), for if we should lose our hope, we will have lost one of our most sustaining possessions.

Sometimes we wonder how to purge our pain when experiencing personal trials. Most often, hope comes when we turn to the Savior, knowing He will help us. We may not know if the blessings we seek will come sooner or later, but one thing we *can* be sure of is that eventually, blessings *will* come.

There will be times when our problems seem to multiply out of control. But even when we find ourselves knee-deep in trials, we can hold fast to hope, knowing that the Lord, who always fulfills His word, promised, “He that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome” (Doctrine and Covenants 63:20).

The hymn “The Lord Is My Shepherd” offers great hope and comfort:

Thru the valley and shadow of death though I stray,
Since thou art my Guardian, no evil I fear.
Thy rod shall defend me, thy staff be my stay.
No harm can befall with my Comforter near.³

In every generation, disciples of Christ have been invited to center their hope steadfastly on Christ. President Howard W. Hunter taught:

For Latter-day Saints this is a time of great hope and excitement—one of the greatest eras . . . in any dispensation. . . . We need to have faith and hope, two of the greatest fundamental virtues of any discipleship of Christ. We must continue to exercise confidence in God. . . . He will bless us as a people. . . . He will bless us as individuals. . . .

I promise you . . . in the name of the Lord whose servant I am that God will always protect and care for his people. . . . With the gospel of Jesus Christ, you have every hope and promise and reassurance. The Lord has power over his Saints and will always prepare places of peace, defense, and safety for his people. When we have faith in God we can hope for a better world—for us personally and for all mankind.⁴

If we have hope, we don't have to give up. Ever.

HOPE EMANATES FROM OUR SAVIOR

The Apostle Paul called the Lord [Jesus Christ](#) “our hope” (1 Timothy 1:1). And indeed, hope does radiate from the Savior and transcends this mortal sphere as we look forward to a more excellent world. The prophet Mormon said, “Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this

because of your faith in him” (Moroni 7:41). Real hope is not associated with anything temporary or transient but rather in Christ who is immortal and eternal!

Hope is a principle of promise, and to receive its blessings, we must be proactive and make hope an integral part of our lives. We display hope each time we choose to live by the commandments and to repent when we have sinned. The great Nephite leader Moroni continued to have hope even after having witnessed the horrifying destruction of his people. He wrote, “And I also remember that thou [the Lord] hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have a more excellent hope; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared” (Ether 12:32).

Surely our highest hope is to receive our own inheritance when we return to the heavenly realms above. Because of Christ’s loving sacrifice for all mankind, He can, if we prove faithful, seal us up as His and bring about our everlasting salvation. Elder Steven E. Snow said, “Our hope in the Atonement empowers us with eternal perspective. Such perspective allows us to look beyond the here and now on into the promise of the eternities. We don’t have to be trapped in the narrow confines of society’s fickle expectations. We are free to look forward to celestial glory, sealed to our family and loved ones.”⁵

HAVING HOPE REQUIRES PATIENCE

Patience is the medium that tethers us to hope and sustains us when clouds of darkness descend. With hope, we can “have patience, and bear . . . [our] afflictions” (Alma 34:41). Paul explained that “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope” (Romans 5:3–4). For emotional health and spiritual stamina, we need to look forward with hope, having the patient assurance that doing so will enable us to endure our personal afflictions. Hope allows us to put one foot in front of the other even when we doubt our ability to take another step.

While on earth, we are to press forward with hope in the Resurrection and of exaltation in the life to come. Hope allows us to patiently wait for promised

blessings while taking daily action to ensure we keep the covenants we have made.

Hope allows us to peer through the glass even when the surface is dark and murky. Patience teaches that even in the midst of difficulties, there is reason to rejoice, while hope allows us to know that in time, deliverance *will* come. Even when swamped by suffering, we can rely on the light of hope to see our way through. The spiritual endowment of hope gives us the ability to see a wider perspective, feel an inner serenity, and be suffused with the warm peace that comes from the Holy Ghost, which “filleteth [us] with hope and perfect love” (Moroni 8:26). The one great hope we all cling to is to know that one day, we will be able to kneel at the feet of Jesus Christ and have Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23).

HOPE PROVIDES AN ANCHOR TO OUR SOULS

Although it may not appear so at first, the story of Adam and Eve is actually one of hope. When cast out of the Garden of Eden and into the lone and dreary world, our first parents left God’s presence, which must have been devastating. Despite difficult circumstances, Adam and Eve clung to God’s hopeful promise that He would send messengers to teach them. Although going into a mortal world was challenging, it did provide an opportunity for Adam and Eve to learn important lessons. As they faced opposition in their new world, Adam and Eve cultivated qualities they might not have otherwise obtained. While in mortality, they made mistakes, as we all do, and were taught to repent. Learning about the plan of salvation must have given them much hope. Like Adam and Eve, we are blessed to know about God’s plan, for without it, earthly life would be a miasma of fear and uncertainty. Knowing who we are and where we came from brings hope and peace.

When engulfed with hardships, we must dig deep into our faith and hold on to hope, which provides an “anchor to our soul” (Hebrews 6:19) that permits us to remain steadfast. “Life presses all kinds of burdens on each of us, some light but others relentless and heavy,” Elder L. Whitney Clayton said. “People struggle every day under burdens that tax their souls. . . . They can be emotionally or physically ponderous. They can be worrisome, oppressive, and exhausting. And they can continue for years. . . . Through it all, the Savior

offers us sustaining strength and support, and in His own time and way, He offers deliverance.”⁶

When we cultivate hope and fortify it with faith, the combination creates a force strong as steel, connecting us to Christ. Although hardships can cause us to drift in the tide of despair, our celestial connection will help us hold fast to hope. “Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast” (Ether 12:4).

THE RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOPE, FAITH, AND CHARITY

In the scriptures, hope is often linked with faith and charity. Paul speaks of these three principles: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three” (1 Corinthians 13:13). Moroni also connected these virtues: “Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there be faith, there must also be hope; and if there must be hope, there must also be charity. And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God” (Moroni 10:20–21).

Why are these three principles intrinsically connected? Because hope is essential to faith, faith is necessary to have hope, and both are central to charity. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf spoke of this reciprocal relationship, saying, “Hope is one leg of a three-legged stool, together with faith and charity. These three stabilize our lives regardless of the rough or uneven surfaces we might encounter at the time. The scriptures are clear and certain about the importance of hope. The Apostle Paul taught that the scriptures were written to the end that we ‘might have hope’ (Romans 15:4).”⁷

Faith, hope, and charity can be thought of as interlacing virtues, each one having a critical part to play in developing and defining our testimonies. These three virtues are not easily separated because each complements the others. The links between these three are undeniable, for the brighter our hope, the greater our faith; and the stronger our hope, the more we will abound in charity.

Another reason faith, hope, and charity are often spoken of interchangeably is because these three virtues are interactive and mutually reinforcing. An

increase in one tends to result in an increase in the others. Hope, faith, and charity all relate to our Redeemer; as President Nelson explained, “*Faith* is rooted in Jesus Christ. *Hope* centers in his Atonement. *Charity* is manifest in the ‘pure love of Christ’ (Moroni 7:47). These three attributes are intertwined like strands in a cable and may not always be precisely distinguished. Together they become our tether to the celestial kingdom.”⁸

Hope and faith are cardinal virtues. While faith can be seen as having its roots in the past—such as in Christ’s death, Resurrection, and Atonement—hope is more often focused on the future—such as our hope that if we prove faithful, we will attain exaltation. Faith provides a foundation for our belief in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, which is critical to strengthening us during mortality. Hope, in turn, constitutes “the assurance of things hoped for” (Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 11:1 [in Hebrews 11:1, footnote *b*]) and the proof of things “not seen” (Ether 12:6). Charity further strengthens our foundation, for as we develop charity, we become better disciples of Christ (see Moroni 7:44).

PRESS FORWARD IN HOPE

As we move through life, hope allows us to be serene without being naive, strong without being stubborn, and steadfast without being obstinate. Hope creates a heartening determination within ourselves that helps us not only *tolerate* our trials but *endure them well*. Hope does not mean we are blind to reality, but it gives us the capability—when faced with difficulties—to see positive aspects and potential benefits. When hardships are beyond our power to control, hope helps us accept our circumstances without being cast down. People with hope make a sincere attempt to find a “silver lining,” even during dire situations.

Hope blesses our lives because it gives us an assurance of a brighter tomorrow. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland urges us to have hope, even in these days when many hearts are failing: “May we press forward with love in our hearts, walking in the ‘brightness of hope’ (2 Nephi 31:20) that lights the path of holy anticipation we have been on now for 200 years. I testify that the future is going to be as miracle-filled and bountifully blessed as the past has been. We

have every reason to hope for blessings even greater than those we have already received because this is the work of Almighty God, this is the Church of continuing revelation, this is the gospel of Christ's unlimited grace and benevolence.”²

Having a strong and abiding faith in Jesus Christ and His promises encourages us to hope for better things to come. For this reason, Mormon counseled his son Moroni, “Be faithful in Christ; . . . May Christ lift thee up, and may his . . . mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever” (Moroni 9:25).

Hope acts as a steadying force in our lives and gives us peace and confidence by supplying us with the power to endure. As we cultivate hope, we draw nearer to Christ, who can then comfort us in our afflictions and help us stay on the path that leads to exaltation. Hope pierces the darkness of our current painful circumstances by allowing us to catch a glimpse of the inspiring light of tomorrow. “The things we hope *in* sustain us during our daily walk,” states President Uchtdorf. “They uphold us through trials, temptations, and sorrow. Everyone has experienced discouragement and difficulty. Indeed, there are times when the darkness may seem unbearable. It is in these times that the divine principles of the restored gospel we hope *in* can uphold us and carry us until, once again, we walk in the light.”¹⁰

Hope is a treasured gift that supports us when the world is bleak. While we may go through many harsh experiences, we can look to the future with hope in the atoning sacrifice of our Savior, knowing we will have every cause to rejoice when we have concluded our mission, for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

². Neal A. Maxwell, “Hope through the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 62.

³. “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” *Hymns*, no. 108.

⁴. Howard W. Hunter, “Hope: An Anchor to the Souls of Men” (Brigham Young University devotional, Feb. 7, 1993), 3–5, speeches.byu.edu.

⁵. Steven E. Snow, “Hope,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 54.

⁶. L. Whitney Clayton. “That Your Burdens May be Light,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 12, 14.

⁷. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 21.

⁸. Russell M. Nelson, “A More Excellent Hope,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 61; emphasis in original.

⁹. Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Perfect Brightness of Hope,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 83–84.

¹⁰. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” 23; emphasis in original.

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